

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Often Forgotten

I'm sure that my dear friend Bill Graham who is a world class historian will appreciate this tiny epistle. He speaks at Young Harris College often and will answer almost any question you have concerning what, when, why and how WWI actually seeded so much of more forthcoming and current history. And yet, many Americans continue to forget! Or perhaps, never learned.

The Veterans' Corner Scott Drummond USCG Veteran



One hundred years ago as of this past Sunday in the Meuse-Argonne area of France an armistice was declared. As of November 11, 1918 more than 26,000 were killed and 95,000 wounded of more than one million Americans involved in the fierce, horrific and unrelenting war against imperial Germany. As per reading of historical references, this battle, Meuse-Argonne was the single bloodiest military confrontation in our history.

We tend to focus on more recent military history such as WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Mideast Wars, etc., all of which are critically important to NEVER FORGET. However WWI and the Versailles Treaty was the seed initiating the horrors and laid a clear pathway for WWII and our future.

Our focus here and not to be forgotten is Veterans Day, which originated on the 11th hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month as Armistice Day back in 1918 when we were promised that WWI would be "the war that ended all wars". How many forgot that this year is the 100th year anniversary of ending that war. Beginning with that armistice we remembered the sacrifices of those who gave so much including the many supreme sacrifices.

We continue this reverent observation and honor of all, each and every Honorable Veteran who have served America in uniform today. We know and are fully aware that unlike the perpetual politician's blunderbuss, that as long as evil exists on earth there will be more wars, skirmishes and battles. Freedom is never free and never will be. Which once again makes those who serve in uniform very special Americans as they alone, not the politicians, stand in the way of these wars and battles becoming much worse. Our young men and women scattered all across our globe also prevent these profane wars from occurring right here on our American soil. Never forget!

For Americans who like to vacation in Europe the seven American burial grounds, one in England, one in Belgium, and five in France are not often visited by Americans. However local residents pay honor and respect of the many who served before us and fell on their soil in our never ending fight for freedom, liberty and sovereignty for those nations who sacrificed so much for.

It must be remembered that our USA never fought for control of these nations nor tried to annex them as colonies. Once again certain political blunderbuss erroneously cites "colonization" as reason for our American military's existence. This kind of thinking is what so often leads us into wars. Our military strength, hence our men and women who serve are the "wall", averting these wars from occurring on our soil. Every day is Veterans Day. Never forget!

Semper Paratus

Letters to The Editor

Can This Election be a New Beginning?

Dear Editor, Our nation has spoken. We now have a Democratic controlled House, a Republican controlled Senate, and a Republican president. Our government also now has a choice. It can continue with gridlock, partisan divide, anger and accusations, defending one's own turf, or it can decide it is time to put partisan politics aside and work together on action that is good for America. This will require people actually talking to each other, and, more importantly, listening to each other. I am old enough to remember when this was actually done in Washington! There is no absolute right or wrong in this. Republicans have much to offer, as do Democrats, and, working together and compromising, they can come up with legislation that will make our nation stronger, safer, and more prosperous.

We all share many values in common. I think we all care about honesty, the value of hard work, caring for the vulnerable, loyalty, fairness, family, faith, freedom, integrity, and leaving a healthier, more prosperous America to future generations. Using those shared values, surely we can come together to act for the common good of our beloved country.

One very pressing problem that has to be dealt with is climate change, and it will obviously involve dialogue and compromise. One solution already on the table is a carbon fee and dividend plan, which involves putting a price on the production of greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels and returning all the money to all of our citizens.

It already has some bipartisan support, for Democrats value it as the single best plan to combat climate change, and it draws Republican support because it is a free market plan that actually grows the economy and puts more money back into the average American's pocket. Now is the time to sit down, talk, and compromise and reach a solution that will benefit America and can show us the way to solve America's most pressing problems.

Vernon Dixon, MD

The Historical Continuum

Dear Editor, In Commemoration of World War I (that never ended) World War I along with the Russian Revolution of 1917 did not end even after World War II, followed by the Chinese Revolution, the Korean War, the colonial wars in Africa, Indo-China and especially the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the Cuban Revolution, the U.S. counter-revolutions and the wars of national liberation against colonialism abroad and the growing racist prison-industrial complex at home.

Nationalism, militarism and imperialist wars for empire since the end of the 19th century until today and the wars for oil and other resources, hegemony in regions of the Middle East are one unbroken chain of militarism in service of and for expanding control by capitalist elites for human and material resources. It is a litany of violence, global warming and species extinction, in pursuit of resources, power and wealth. The result for the U.S. is the death of democracy, replaced by a military-industrial corporate plutocracy and fascist dictatorship. Red scare, CIA covert operations, criminal wars of aggression, regime change, coups, assassinations and political interference, censorship and thought control by media, think tanks, academia, technocrats and political action committees, influence peddling by Super-PACs, Citizens United, big money in politics, etc. It is a world imperiled by gangsters.

Lance G. Jobson

Taxes and Tax Assessors

To the self-righteous, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did". I have hope to get into Heaven after all because I am a Tax Assessor which is close to being a Tax Collector except assessors just tell the tax collector how much to go grab from you. This week I am at Callaway Gardens near Pine Mountain, Georgia attending a 40-hour Tax Assessor training course.

RC&D Frank Riley Executive Director



Callaway Gardens is decorated with the most beautiful Christmas lights and Christmas decorations that you can imagine and has the Fantasy in Lights going on now which is a drive, (or shuttle), through a dazzling display of Christmas lights that will be an event to remember. "There are 8 million lights in 15 dazzling scenes covering 2,500 acres of spectacular scenery". Callaway Gardens is a go-to place for the light show in the fall; the blooming flowers of all kinds in the Spring; the lakes and walking/bike paths in the summer; and cozy getaway cabins in the winter. It really sounds like a vacation, but we have been sitting in class for 5 days and my old brain is cramped full.

I am Chairman of the Towns County Board of Tax Assessors and I'm not sure if this is more like being a tax collector or prostitute but we do the best we can! A Tax Assessor just figures out how much taxes you owe by various means (dart board, Ouija board, dice, etc.) to give to our "Zacchaeus" to collect.

This week we are learning about Special Assessments and Tax Exemptions. You can all be confident that we will know what we are doing when we use our Ouija board to determine how much you owe our "Zacchaeus". One thing you can count on with our assessor board is that everybody in Towns County will be treated equally when it comes to taxes. We all must pay our fair share, so the county can provide services for all to enjoy. Taxes are a topic that people don't like to talk about, but I'm always glad to pay my taxes because without the revenue, Towns County could not provide the security and public services, like Sheriff's protection, Fire Department, EMTs, Ambulance, Air Ambulance, Road maintenance, Schools, and many other things that we take for granted in our daily lives. Tax assessment is performed by the Appraisers in the tax assessor's office. The 3 members of the Board of tax assessors are appointed and are charged with determining the value of each taxable property in the county using information provided by the county tax appraisers. This information is then used to determine the necessary rates of taxation to support the county's annual budget.

Property taxes are levied on real property which includes the land, structures, or other fixed buildings. The assessed value of your property is determined on January 1st each year and is calculated as 40% of the fair market value of your property. The property tax rate also called a millage rate, is the amount per \$1,000 of property value (25 mills is equal to \$25 for every \$1,000 of assessed value or 2.5%) that is needed to calculate local property taxes and is multiplied times the assessed value to determine your tax bill. There are also exemptions that can decrease the assessed value of your property if you fall into certain categories.

The most used exemption, if you are an owner-occupant, is called a homestead exemption where the state allows a taxpayer \$2,000 reduction in their assessed value of their home before taxes are calculated.

Towns County has enacted a homestead valuation freeze exemption which will freeze the valuation of property at the base year valuation for as long as the homeowner owns and resides on the property. In addition to the assessed value of your property, your bill is based on what your property is used for (residential, agricultural, apartment, office, commercial, vacant land and so on). Some uses, like land and buildings used for religious or spiritual purposes, may be exempt. Agricultural land that is enrolled in a 10-year covenant, can be taxed at a much-reduced rate in order to keep families from having to sell the farm to pay the taxes. There are many exemptions and we are learning about them this week. Remember, property taxes are one of the most crucial bills to pay so pay them on time and be glad that we live in Towns County where our taxes are among the lowest in Georgia.

Probably in every culture, in every part of history, from the tax collectors of ancient Israel to the IRS agents of today, the tax man has received more than his share of scorn and contempt. The New Testament indicates that the occupation of "tax collector" was looked down upon by the general populace, but without us we would not be able to enjoy the life that we have here in the mountains of North Georgia so be nice to your tax collector and assessor and they will be nice to you.

For more information on property taxes see your local county tax office or contact RC&D at www.info.ccrd@gmail.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO: Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor, PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net. Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc.

Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.*

Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.

Ladybugs

Ladybugs, some people call them lady beetles, move into our homes as temperatures fall. They are looking for a protected spot to spend the winter, also called overwintering. They will usually prefer houses that have light colored walls because these reflect the sunlight. The Asian ladybug was imported to the US in the late 1970's to eat aphids on pecan trees. Aphids are the small oval insects that feed on leaves, sucking the sweet sap out of the plants. Some people call them plant lice. Ladybugs love to eat aphids, making them an extremely beneficial insect to have around. They are good for your garden during the growing months.

UGA Extension Watching and Working Jacob Williams



We have ladybugs native to Georgia, but they do not do a good job controlling tree-feeding aphids. These imported Asian ladybugs feed on pecan aphids, reducing the need for pesticide sprays. However, this supply of inexpensive and safe aphid control is not entirely free because they need to find a place to overwinter.

In Asia, these ladybugs overwinter on rock walls. In the U.S. they look for the walls and ceilings of buildings - including our homes. Many find their way inside. Though they do not bite, sting, or eat our food - they are a nuisance. They can stain surfaces if you squish them or scare them. They can release a yellow fluid that has a strong odor.

How do we get rid of them? Since they are such a help, try not to kill them. Try to relocate them to outside where they belong. This way they can live to eat aphids again next year. Here are several suggestions.

The easiest way to dispose of them is to suck them up into a hand-held vacuum. Then dump them back outside far away from the house. You can also sweep them out of the house, but be careful that the yellow fluid they give off does not stain anything.

If you use a regular vacuum, put the toe end of a pair of hose or knee-high stockings over the end of the vacuum hose. Hold it in place by putting a rubber band over the end of the vacuum hose and the stocking. Do not let the stocking get sucked up the vacuum hose. Vacuum up the bugs, pull out the stocking, and twist tie it until you can release the bugs outside. This is not a stocking to put over your chimney, but they could be a gift to your garden for next year.

Caulk up or otherwise seal gaps and holes that ladybugs can enter. Seal cracks around doors with weather-stripping. This will help keep out other pests too and reduce energy bills.

A final control would be to spray around your home with an insecticide to kill the ladybugs before they get in. I do not recommend this since it is so much better to just gather them up and put them back outside. If you have decided to kill the bugs, it is fairly easy just to vacuum them all up and dispose of the bag. Insecticides can be used to kill the bugs as well, but they won't be very effective in your home because you aren't spraying the source from where the ladybugs are coming.

If you can, try to enjoy the ladybugs. You do not have to let them ruin your house though. Use these tips to send the ladybugs back to their home.

If you have any questions about ladybugs or other insects around your house please contact your local Extension office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

"I don't recall inviting that guy. Who is he?" "Some peddler. Calls himself Black Friday."



Towns County Community Calendar

Table listing community events such as Bridge Players, Free GED prep, SMART Recovery, etc. with dates and times.

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

Kenneth West Owner/Publisher, Shawn Jarrard Editor, Mark Smith Staff Writer, Lowell Nicholson Photographer, Derek Richards Advertising Director, Shawn Henrikson Copy Editor, Todd Forrest Sports

Publication No: 635540 Advertising, News deadlines: Friday at 5 p.m. Towns County (1 Year) \$25. Out of County (1 Year) \$30. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points. The Towns County Herald is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. Postmaster: Send change of address to: Towns County Herald, P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Office located at: 518 N. Main St. Suite 7 "The Mall", Hiawassee Phone: (706) 896-4454 Fax: (706) 896-1745 Email: tcherald@windstream.net Or mail to: PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546